

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00

EB-07 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DIWY-01 /077 W

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P R 021324Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7631

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

COMUSMACHTAI BKK TH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 2195

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MILI, MPOL, SOPN, TH

SUBJECT: U.S. REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND

1. BANGKOK POST FRONTPAGED REPORT FEB. 2 THAT U.S. WILL KEEP 4,000 TO 5,000 U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL HERE AFTER MARCH 20 DEADLINE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. COMBAT FORCES.

2. BEGIN TEXT. THE UNITED STATES WILL RETAIN ABOUT 4,000 TO 5,000 MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THIS COUNTRY IN THE FORM OF CIVILIAN ADVISERS AND TECHNICIANS AFTER THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. SERVICEMEN ON MARCH 20, AN INFORMED SOURCE SAID YESTERDAY. HE SAID THE POST-PULLOUT FORCE WILL BE BASED AT KORAT AND WILL INCLUDE A NUMBER OF FEMALES. MOST THE SERVICEMEN WILL BE SERVING THEIR FIRST TOURS IN THAILAND. THE SOURCE SAID WOMEN OFFICERS ARE BEING ASSIGNED HERE TO TAKE CHARGE OF ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL ASSIST IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT WORK WITH MOST ATTENTION FOCUSED ON AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT TO TRANSFORM THE DROUGHT-PRONE NORTHEAST INTO A REAFFORESTATION AREA. END TEXT.

3. ARTICLE IS EXAMPLE OF WILDLY INACCURATE STORIES THAT HAVE BEGUN TO SURFACE IN SPECULATION ABOUT U.S. RESIDUAL HERE.

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4. NYT, CBS AND NBC RADIO QUERIED EMBASSY TODAY ON THE POST ARTICLE. SPOKESMAN REPLIED THAT QTE THERE ARE CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THAILAND ON THE REDUCTION OF U.S. TROOPS IN THAILAND. WHEN THOSE CONSULTATIONS LEAD TO DECISIONS, THEY ARE ANNOUNCED BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS UNQTE. HE DREW TO THEIR ATTENTION JOINT THAI-U.S. STATEMENT OF NOV. 22, 1975 ANNOUNCING THAT U.S. FACILITY AT KORAT WOULD BE CLOSED BY FEB. 29, 1976. HE DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON ANY ASPECT OF CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THAI AND U.S., AND POINTED TO THE PORTION ABOUT KORAT IN THE BANGKOK POST STORY AS THE QTE SORT OF INACCURACY DEVELOPED BY SPECULATION UNQTE.

5. AP BUREAU CHIEF DENIS GRAY SAID RELIABLE THAI CIVILIAN OFFICIAL WHO WORKS WITH THAI MILITARY DETAILED FOR HIM U.S. RESIDUAL FORCE THAT WOULD INCLUDE QTE ABOUT 3,000 UNQTE PERSONNEL. RESIDUAL, HE SAID, WOULD INCLUDE A 450-MAN UNIT OF AMERICAN EXPERTS THAT CAN BE SHIFTED WHEREVER THE RTG NEEDS THEM FOR ASPECTS OF THAI SECURITY AS WELL AS AMERICAN UNITS STATIONED AT FORMERLY U.S.-CONTROLLED BASES IN NORTH AND NORTHEAST. SOURCE SAID BOTH U.S. AND THAI OFFICIALS CONCERNED ABOUT SECURITY OF REMAINING U.S. PERSONNEL BECAUSE QTE THEY WOULD BE MORE A PART OF THAI MILITARY THAN U.S. MILITARY UNQTE. HE FURTHER TOLD AP THAT 280 U.S. PERSONNEL WOULD REMAIN AT JUSMAG.

6. SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT AP STORY WAS FULL OF INACCURACIES. WHEN GRAY DEPARTED SPOKESMAN'S OFFICE, HE APPEARED TO BE DISSUADED FROM FILING THE STORY AS WRITTEN, THOUGH HE SAID HE WOULD REPORT THE 3,000-MAN RESIDUAL UNLESS WE SPECIFICALLY DENIED IT. WE DID NOT.
WHITEHOUSE

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